



Have a “Heart-to-Heart” With Your Teen About the Risks of Substance Use

Six actions parents can take to help keep their children away from drugs

- **Establish and Maintain Good Communication With Your Child:** Establishing a close relationship with your child now will make it easier for her to come to you when she has a problem. Talk about your family values and the use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs.
- **Get Involved in Your Child’s Life:** Participate in your child’s activities (bring water for the soccer team, volunteer in your child’s classroom, attend a recital or play, help with a science project) and praise his accomplishments.
- **Make Clear Rules and Enforce Them With Consistency and Appropriate Consequences:** If you let your child know up front that you don’t approve of using alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs, your child is less likely to use those substances.”
- **Be a Positive Role Model:** Children like to imitate adults. Avoid actions that say, “Do as I say, not as I do.” A parent or caregiver abusing alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs may increase a child’s chances of using, using early and becoming dependent on a substance.
- **Help Your Child Choose Friends Wisely:** Youth drug use often stems more from the need for peer acceptance rather than the inability to “just say no” to peers.
- **Monitor Your Child’s Activities:** Establish relationships with your child’s friends and their parents, and when your child goes out, make sure you know where he’s going, whom he will be with and what he will be doing.